

"A country is alive as long as its culture stays alive" was engraved in the pediment of destroyed national museum in Kabul. To enhance this epitaph, in 2003, May 21st became the international day that stresses the importance of promoting the diversity of the cultural expression all over the world.

Hanuman Audiovisual Resource Center in Cambodia, led by Rithy Panh, is committed to turning this idea into effective action by gathering a large collection of audiovisual archives, raising Cambodian public interest in its history and culture, and supporting quality and creativity for audiovisual production.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED SO FAR?

The research, collection, and processing of audiovisual archives continues to grow in 3 ways:

In France, research began in 2004 with some of our partners, particularly the National Audiovisual Institute (INA). Collection and processing were initiated last summer and about 1500 documents are now digitized and imported into our database.

In Cambodia, the initial searches were completed in March 2006. The collection and processing of some priority funds will start in June of this year at the National Cinema Department, the National Cambodian Television Network (TVK), Kampuchea Agency of Press (AKP) and the National Museum. Many photographic collections available for instance at Cedorek (The Center of Documentation and Research of Khmer civilization), Cambodge Soir, etc. will be processed later on this year or next.

Most of this work will be done thanks to the financial support of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs that has decided to renew its funding with the "Plan Images Archives" for three years.

In the rest of the world, such as China, Vietnam, the U.S., the Netherlands and Germany, preliminary research has only begun and further steps are not likely to be initiated before 2007.

Parallel to the state of the archive collections, our team is mobilizing to prepare for the opening of Hanuman Audiovisual Resource Center. It hopes to welcome the Cambodian public in November 2006. The main priorities are to finalize the building renovations, to gather all of the technical equipment, and to hire and train a team of archivists.

Several new sponsors and partners have helped to support our efforts, and we extend our particular thanks to a French cultural association, Mrs Sandra Alvarez de Toledo (editor and art historian) and the Fémis Film School in Paris. The Thomson Foundation has contributed to the training of our archivists, by funding special training sessions with experts from the INA and CNC (French National Center of Cinema).

If you wish to support our project, please feel free to get in touch with our teams in Phnom Penh or in Paris. Also, if you own or know of documents that could enrich the Hanuman collection, please share your information with us.



An audiovisual archive... from the cupboard to the Cambodian public.... a long way around...

What is an audiovisual archive?

It can be a movie, a documentary, a photograph, music, a radio program, a drawing, a text of any kind.

Treasure hunting... What are we looking for?

The Audiovisual Resource Center aims to contribute to the vivacity of Cambodian cultural identity and believes that recomposing its audiovisual memories, can help achieve this goal. Therefore, the Center is looking for any audiovisual archive with patrimonial or cultural value, old or new, Cambodian or foreign, that can provide input about Cambodian history, culture or traditions.

Finding the sources

Knowing what one wants seems simpler than knowing where to search for it. National archive centers such as the INA in France, the Library of Congress in the U.S., and the Cinema Department in Cambodia are usually good sources, but these are not the only ones. Museums, media outlets, institutions, many private collectors can also hide treasures. The research stage is an ongoing process.

Assessing the potential

After the initial search, the preparatory work has been completed with a preliminary inventory; it gives data about the specific interest of the fund, its physical conditions, the feasibility of digitizing, its legal status, etc.

When done, the processing of the archives can start.

It usually follows 3 key steps:

To digitize the archive to save it durably and import it into the database as a numeric file to ease its accessibility;

To analyze, summarize and codify the content to ease identification and access to the document for the user;

To communicate, this is the final objective. Saving traces of the past has to be a meaningful process, a way to confront history to build a stronger future. Opening in November 2006, Hanuman Center will offer the public access to the archival material with viewing stations, a specific events program throughout the year, including screenings, lectures, and debates as well as pedagogical material and programs designed for schools and universities.

in Cambodia

Sabine Trannin
Tel : +855 (0) 92 251 607
Email : arpa@hanuman.org.kh

in Paris

Liane Willemont
Tel : +33 (0) 6 09 56 62 52
Email : aadac@hanuman.org.kh